



Volunteer Spotlight – June 2017

Joan Blaise

If you are looking for a way to fill your days or evenings, chances are that Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services (SFBFS) has an opportunity for you. SFBFS' services are made possible by a talented and diverse corps of volunteers, some of which are retired and now sharing their skills and time with the community. SFBFS is fortunate to have volunteers such as Joan Blaise, who joined SFBFS after wrapping up her career with the US Postal Service. Because she lives nearby, Joan knew about SFBFS and signed up for a volunteer orientation in April 2014. Soon, she was a regular volunteer in the Demonstration Garden and at food distributions. Because Joan also helps care for her granddaughter, flexibility of volunteer roles also attracted her to these opportunities.

In the Demonstration Garden, Joan assists with all aspects of garden maintenance, including planting seeds, transplanting, weeding, watering and harvesting. Throughout a change in staff, Joan remained the one constant volunteer presence in the garden. She loves the hands-on aspect of working with the plants and soil and seeing the crops grow from start to finish. At food distributions, Joan distributes fresh grocery items to families and individuals. A little over a year ago, Joan decided to expand her volunteer involvement and began volunteering in the Parent Education program.

In Parent Education, Joan found her niche in the Boutique, where parents exchange their earned Baby Bucks for free items such as diapers, baby and maternity clothing, toys and other baby supplies. Joan sorts donations, organizes the shopping area and displays, but most of all, assists the families.



"I love watching the joy on the faces of the babies and kids," she says. "It is fun to watch the kids play with new toys they don't normally have access to." According to Gabriela Lopez, Parent Education Program Manager, Joan is a wonderful part of the volunteer team. "Joan is responsible and consistent," notes Gabriela. "She makes sure the Boutique is tidy and clean and also helps clients find specific items they are looking for. I completely trust Joan to make decisions in the Boutique if I am not available to help." Because SFBFS staff relies 100% on volunteers to staff the Boutique, volunteers such as Joan are invaluable. She helps keep the Boutique open and available to families for evening service every week.

When Joan isn't volunteering at SFBFS, she can be found having fun with her granddaughter, knitting and crocheting blankets for the Linus Project and undergoing new volunteer training for Sacramento Tree Foundation. SFBFS is grateful to have incredibly dedicated individuals such as Joan in our volunteer corps.